

# The Effect of Self-Control and Parenting Attitude on Cyberbullying: Focus on Mediating Cyber Ethics

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## ABSTRACT

Violence and crime are taking place in the cyber space that is forming a new culture and ethics, and internet ethical consciousness is required. This study was to investigate whether self - control and parenting attitude directly affect cyberbullying. Also, it was confirmed that this self – control and parenting attitude affects cyber ethics. In addition, we tried to confirm whether there is a mediating effect of cyber ethics on cyberbullying. For this, 283 data were collected from cyber violence experienced people. The research method used factor analysis and covariance structure analysis. The results of the study are as follows. First, self - control and parenting attitudes had a significant effect on cyber ethics. Second, the mediating effect was confirmed in the causal relationship between parenting attitude toward children and cyberbullying. These findings suggest that parents' democratic attitude and cyber ethics should be strengthened to prevent and reduce cyberbullying. It should develop the ability to recognize cyber space correctly through parent education program, cyber ethics awareness program, cyber violence reduction and prevention program.

**Keywords:** *self-control, parenting attitude, cyberbullying, responsibility ethics, respect ethics, cyber ethics*

## Introduction

Cyber space is an information activity space created by the Internet, and it is a social, economic, and cultural space beyond information communication that simply exchanges information. It is possible to communicate variously through cyberspace, experience positive functions such as information sharing and creation, and social solidarity<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the dysfunctional phenomena of information and communication society such as cyberbullying, cyber defamation and hacking are increasing not only for the general public but also for adolescents. The development of information and communication technologies and the high penetration rate of smart devices are accompanied by dysfunctional and pure functions<sup>4</sup>. The abuse of cyber violence in online and SNS as well as in the domestic are raised as a serious social

problem. Domestic cyber violence is mainly focused on smartphones<sup>11</sup> that can use KakaoTalk or SNS, rather than computer based ones. The rate of traditional school violence accompanied by money laundering or violence decreases<sup>10</sup> on the other hand, the proportion of cyber violence or language violence using e-mail, smartphone, and SNS has increased rather than increased.

As the age of cyber-violent perpetrators decreases, cyber-violence does not know that it is a crime. Instead, it recognizes cyber violence as “play” and does not feel guilty “just bored”. Juveniles who have been victimized are again perpetrators<sup>6</sup>. There are some researches to find the cause of cyber violence in the form of internet use of adolescents. The more cyber violence the more the adolescents who have a lot of internet contact and use the internet excessively.<sup>5,15,17</sup> In addition, among the psychological characteristics of adolescents, sensory pursuit propensity and impulsiveness are also factors that directly affect cyber violence. Impulsiveness among adolescent psychological characteristics is a risk factor affecting adolescents' Internet related delinquency, and it is found to be the main cause of increasing cyber verbal violence. Much research has been done in the field of juvenile delinquency. Adolescents with high self-control

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will suppress impulsive and temporary needs, and follow the norms and values required by society, schools, and parents. Lack self-control cause their colleagues to become bullied and alienated<sup>9,12</sup>. Attack behaviors due to these personality traits reduce the opportunities to acquire social skills from their positive colleagues, which leads to problems such as smoking, drinking and violence. The relationship between self-control and cyber-violence experiences, the lower self-control, the more cyber violence increases.

Effects of parenting attitudes and parental relationships on cyber violence<sup>3</sup>. Cyber violence is more frequent among adolescents with low family cohesion and low parental attachment<sup>16</sup>. In addition, the more cyber violence the adolescents perceive, the more the authoritative and controllable parenting attitude and the negative parent-child relationship were revealed. Therefore, it was found that the relationship between the family and parent perceived by adolescents has a direct effect on cyber violence.

As a member of cyber space, it can be said that normative standard system is needed to judge right and wrong, good and bad, ethical and unethical behaviors in living information society<sup>13</sup>. The point of view of internet ethics means the ability to pursue ideals through rational thinking and establish self-moral principles and follow them. All words and behaviors that occur in cyberspace must observe the principle of respecting individual autonomy, it is responsible for all activities<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, in cyberspace more sense of responsibility is required than in the real world. Nonetheless, the fact that violence and crime are carried out without guilt under the name of relieving stress by anonymity and other loss on cyber is the reason why the necessity of internet ethical consciousness becomes more urgent.

Each scholar presents various principles of internet ethical consciousness. But in this study the ethical consciousness of the internet is defined as 'the moral idea that the social member finds his original self in the new framework of information society formed by cyberspace, reflects whether his choice is reasonable and morally justified, And the ability to make judgments of right and wrong that should be basically achieved through self-understanding. We will also examine how ethical consciousness influences cyber violence, focusing on the principle of respect and responsibility.

Factors affecting cyber violence are very diverse including personal variables, environmental variables, and family - related variables. In this study, cyber violence is defined as all activities that cause physical, mental and physical damage to a specific object regardless of the other's intention in the cyber space, investigates the effects of self-control and parental rearing attitudes on cyber violence and cyber-ethical consciousness as well as prevention and reduction of cyber violence.

## Method

### Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Self-control will have a positive impact on cyber ethics.

Hypothesis 1-1: Self-control will have a positive impact on respect ethics.

Hypothesis 1-2: Self-control will have a positive impact on the sense of responsibility

Hypothesis 2: Parenting attitudes toward children will have a positive impact on cyber ethics.

Hypothesis 2-1: Parenting attitudes will have a positive impact on respect ethics.

Hypothesis 2-2: Parenting attitudes will have a positive impact on the sense of responsibility.

Hypothesis 3: Cyber ethics will have a positive impact on cyberbullying.

Hypothesis 3-1: Respect Ethics will have a positive impact on cyberbullying.

Hypothesis 3-2: Responsibility Ethics will have a positive impact on cyberbullying.

Hypothesis 4: Self-control will have a positive impact on cyber-violence.

Hypothesis 5: Parenting attitudes toward children will have a positive impact on cyberbullying.

Hypothesis 6: Self - control will affect cyberbullying as a mediator of cyber ethics.

Hypothesis 6-1: Self – control will affect cyberbullying as a mediator of respect ethics.

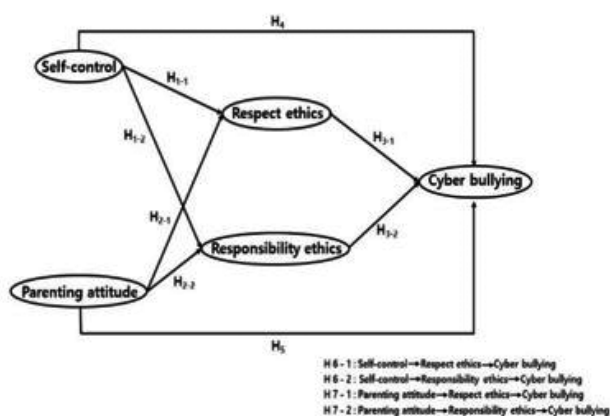
Hypothesis 6-2: Self – control will affect cyberbullying as a mediator of responsibility ethics.

Hypothesis 7: The parenting attitude toward children will affect cyberbullying by mediating cyber ethics.

Hypothesis 7-1: The parenting attitude toward children will affect cyberbullying by mediating respect ethics.

Hypothesis 7-2: The parenting attitude toward children will affect cyberbullying by mediating responsibility ethics.

The purpose of this study is to identify the research hypotheses based on previous research results on cyberbullying, self - control and parenting attitude, and cyber ethical consciousness. For this, we set up the research model as figure 1.



**Figure 1: Research model**

**Subjects:** The data used in the analysis for this study are 283 except for the insincere response and non – response.

### Measurement

**Self-control Scale:** Self-control means that you can control your own cognition, emotion and behavior as you wish. In this study, 5 items were used to measure self-control among the PSI (Problem-Solving Inventory). Cronbach's  $\alpha = .807$  was confirmed as a result of internal consistency of items constituting self-control.

**Parenting Attitude:** In order to measure parenting attitudes in this study, <sup>7</sup> used four items measured as acceptance - rejection and autonomy – control<sup>7</sup>. Cronbach's  $\alpha = .829$  was confirmed as a result of the reliability analysis of parents' parenting attitude.

**Cyber Ethics:** The cyber-ethical consciousness is a measure of the ethical awareness of individual members of society by creating comprehensive norms for the members of society who live in information society. In this study, we used 10 items of the Respect and Responsibility domain of 20 items including the detailed factors <sup>8</sup>. As a result of the reliability analysis of cyber ethics, Cronbach's  $\alpha = .588$  and Cronbach's  $\alpha = .773$ .

**Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying refers to any act that occurs in cyberspace or related to cyberspace, and that gives physical, mental, and physical damage to a specific object regardless of the other's intention. In order to measure this, five items were selected based on the items of cyber violence survey of the Korea Communications Commission (KISA) and Korea Internet Security Agency. Cronbach's alpha = .823 for the reliability analysis of cyberbullying.

**Data Analysis:** A causal relationship model among these variables was established and its validity was verified. The covariance structure analysis was performed using AMOS 21.0. confirmatory factor analysis was used to confirm the validity of the scales used in this study, and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was used for reliability.

## Results and Discussion

**Research Model Verification:** In order to verify the fit of the research model prior to the verification of the research model, the indexes commonly used in existing causal studies were used. First,  $\chi^2$  test was conducted to confirm the fit of the study model. RMR, RMSEA, GFI, and AGFI were used as absolute fit indices, and NFI, CFI, and TLI were used as incremental fit indices. Table 1 shows the initial and final model fit and results for the causal model of self-control and parenting attitudes on cyberbullying.

As a result of the validation, GFI = .914 AGFI = .884 and NFI = .866 among the fitness indexes of the study model. Therefore, this study improved the fit of the research model by removing one item of cyber verbal violence which is confirmed as a measurement variable of the measurement error with the modification index. This study adopts the revised model extracted through the modification process as the final model. 2, the final model is derived.

**Table 1: Comparison of the Research Model and the Final Model Fit Indices**

Fit Indices	RMR	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	TLI
Research model	.069	.054	.914	.884	.866	.934	.919
Finalized model	.068	.053	.920	.890	.868	.936	.920
Acceptance level	>.05	<0.8	>90	>.90	>.90	>90	>.90

**Research model:**  $\chi^2=284.932$ ,  $df=156$ ,  $p<.000$

**Finalized model:**  $\chi^2=247.468$ ,  $df=138$ ,  $p<.026$

**Research Hypothesis Testing:** Based on the results of the final model analysis, the results of the hypothesis testing proposed in this study are shown in Figure 2, Table 2. First, hypothesis 1-1 tried to confirm that self-control will have a positive effect on respect ethics. As a result, the standardized path coefficient between two variables was .048 ( $t = .415$ ,  $p > .01$ ), which did not have a significant effect. Therefore, hypothesis 1-1 was rejected.

Hypothesis 1-2 confirmed that self-control will have a statistically significant effect on the sense of responsibility ethics. As a result, the standardized path coefficient between the two variables was .130 ( $t = 1.979$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and had a positive effect. In other words, the higher the self - control, the higher the level of responsibility ethics. Therefore, Hypothesis 1-2 was adopted. Hypothesis 2-1 confirmed that parenting attitude will have a statistically significant effect on respectful ethics. As a result, the standardized path coefficient between the two variables was .346 ( $t = 3.724$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which had a significant effect. That is, the more democratic the parenting attitude was, the higher the esteem was. Therefore, Hypothesis 2-1 was adopted.

Hypothesis 2-2 that examine the standardized path coefficient between two variables was .266 ( $t = 4.924$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which had a significant effect. In other words, the higher the democratic parenting attitude, the higher the sense of responsible ethics. Therefore, Hypothesis 2-2 was adopted.

Hypothesis 3-1 that examine the respect ethics will have a positive effect on cyber violence. As a result, the standardized path coefficient between the two variables was .421 ( $t = 4.359$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which had a positive effect. In other words, the more cyber violence was, the lower the people who lacked respect for ethics. Therefore, Hypothesis 3-1 was adopted.

Hypothesis 3-2 effect of responsibility ethics and cyber violence as a result, the standardized path coefficient between the two variables was .460 ( $t = 5.182$ ,

$p < .001$ ), which had a positive effect. In other words, cyber violence was higher among people who lacked (low) consciousness of responsible ethics. Therefore, Hypothesis 3-1 was adopted.

Hypothesis 4 seeks to confirm that self-control will have a positive effect on cyber-violence. As a result, the standardized path coefficient between two variables was .020 ( $t = .286$ ,  $p > .05$ ), which did not have a significant effect. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was rejected.

Hypothesis 5 seeks to confirm that parenting attitudes will have a positive impact on cyber violence. As a result, the standardization path coefficient between two variables was  $-.025$  ( $t = -.407$ ,  $p > .05$ ), which did not have a significant effect. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was rejected.

Hypothesis 6-1 seeks to confirm the mediating effect of self-control will affect cyber violence through mediation of respect ethics. As a result of examining the mediating effect on the basis of the statistical significance of the path coefficient, the standardization coefficient of the direct path on the self-regulating self-esteem was not affected by .048 ( $t = .415$ ,  $p > .01$ ) so Hypothesis 6-1 was rejected.

Hypothesis 6-2 seeks to confirm the mediating effect of self-control will affect cyber violence through mediation of responsibility ethics. As a result, we found that the standardization factor of the direct path of self – control on the sense of responsibility ethics was significantly influenced by .130 ( $t = 1.979$ ,  $p < .05$ ) The standardized coefficient of direct path for self-control on cyber violence was .020 ( $t = .286$ ,  $p > .05$ ). In addition, the standardization factor of the direct path of responsibility ethics to cyber violence was .460 ( $t = 5.182$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which had a significant effect. Therefore Hypothesis 6-2 is adopted.

Hypothesis 7-1 tried to confirm the mediating effect of parenting attitude will affect cyber violence through mediation of respect ethics. As a result, it was found that the standardization factor of the direct

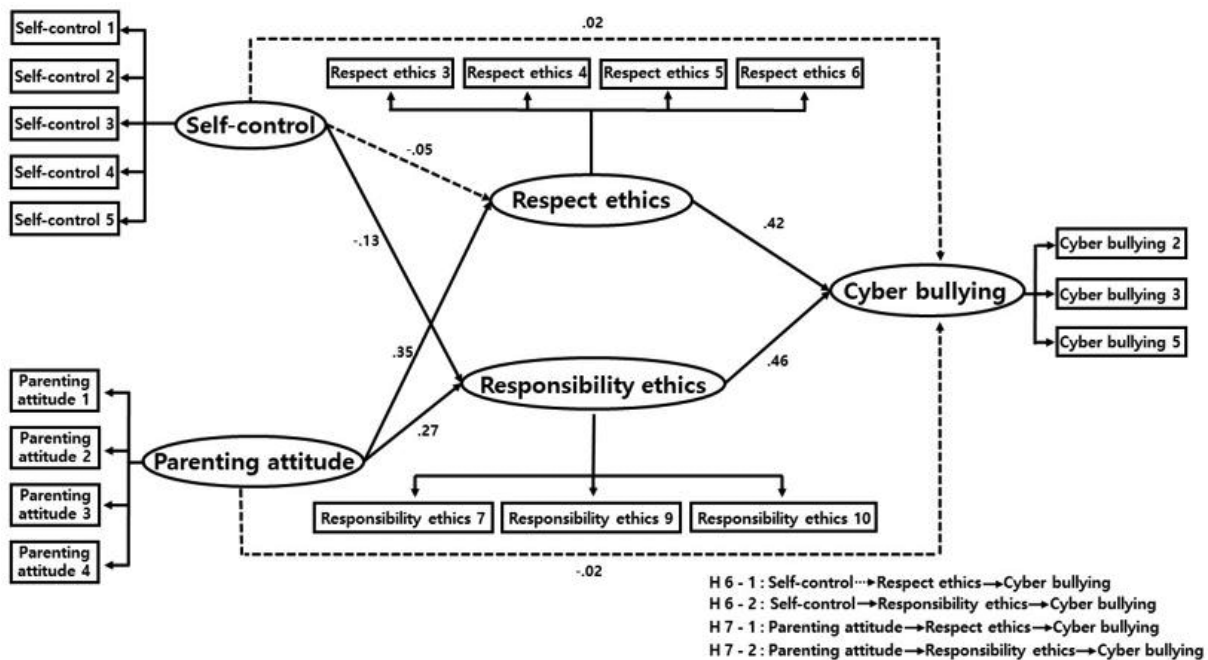
path of parenting attitude toward respect ethics was significantly influenced by .346 ( $t = 3.724, p < .001$ ). And the standardization factor of the direct path of parental rearing attitude toward cyber violence was  $-0.25$  ( $t = -.407, p > .05$ ). In addition, the standardization factor of the direct path of respect ethics to cyber violence was .421 ( $t = 4.359, p < .001$ ), which had a significant effect. Therefore, the hypothesis 7-1 was adopted.

Hypothesis 7-2 seeks to confirm the mediating effect of parenting attitude will affect cyber violence

through mediation of responsibility ethics. As a result, we found that the standardization factor of direct path of parental rearing attitude toward responsibility ethics was significantly influenced by .266 ( $t = 4.924, p < .001$ ). And the standardization factor of the direct path of parental rearing attitude toward cyber violence was  $-0.25$  ( $t = -.407, p > .05$ ). In addition, the standardization factor of the direct path of responsibility ethics to cyber violence was .460 ( $t = 5.182, p < .001$ ), which had a significant effect. Therefore, it is confirmed that there is complete mediation effect, and Hypothesis 7-2 is adopted.

**Table 2: Hypothesis testing Results**

Channel		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p	Result	
Respect ethics	←	Self- control	-.048	.116	-.415	.678	Reject
Responsibility ethics	←	Parenting attitude	.266	.054	4.924	***	Accept
Responsibility ethics	←	Self- control	-.130	.066	-1.979	.048	Accept
Respect ethics	←	Parenting attitude	.346	.093	3.724	***	Accept
Cyberbullying	←	Respect ethics.	.421	.097	4.359	***	Accept
Cyberbullying	←	Responsibility ethics	.460	.089	5.182	***	Accept
Cyberbullying	←	Self- control	.020	.068	.286	.775	Reject
Cyberbullying	←	Parenting attitude	-.025	.061	-.407	.684	Reject
Self-control→ Respect ethics→ Cyberbullying		-				Reject	
Self-control→ Responsibility ethics → Cyberbullying		Partial mediation				Accept	
Parenting Attitude→ Respect ethics→ Cyberbullying		Complete mediation				Accept	
Parenting Attitude→ Responsibility ethics→ Cyberbullying		Complete mediation				Accept	



※ A solid line is an adopted hypothesis; a dotted line a rejected one

**Figure 2: Finalized Research Model**

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether self - control and parenting attitude directly affect cyberbullying. Also, it was confirmed that this self – control and parenting attitude affects cyber ethics. In addition, we tried to confirm whether there is a mediating effect of cyber ethics on cyberbullying.

The research implications are as follows: First, self - control and parenting attitude affects cyber ethics consciousness. Especially, it is confirmed that parenting attitude is very effective in strengthening the awareness of cyber ethics. Second, parenting attitude directly affects cyber violence. In addition, it was confirmed that the attitude of parental rearing has a full mediation effect on the causal relationship between cyber violence and cyber ethics. These findings have contributed to reveal that cyber ethics is playing an important role in understanding cyber violence academically.

Practical implications are as follows.

First, it is worth the research that it is necessary to prepare a self-control training program in the field of education because the effort to increase self-control of students can strengthen the sense of responsibility ethics. Second, the parenting attitude strengthens the cyber ethical consciousness and establishes a parent education program that establishes the perception that it is important to maintain a democratic parenting attitude by parents through causality that results in reducing cyber violence I need something. Third, strengthening the awareness of cyber ethics plays a crucial role in reducing cyber violence. Based on the results of the study, it is necessary to prepare an educational program to strengthen students' awareness of cyber ethics in the school scene. Finally, cyber violence, such as attacking a large number of people who do not know anonymity as a weapon, can be interpreted as an act of deviance in adolescence, but since these behaviors constitute a crime, cyber-ethics education and cyber violence reduction and prevention programs It is necessary to develop competence to recognize cyber space correctly. Despite these findings, the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are as follows. This study has limitations because it is limited to college students. Therefore, it does not include all age groups who have cyber violence. In the future, it will be necessary to make efforts to generalize the research results by conducting

research including youth. In addition, there is a limitation that this study considers only the self - control and parenting attitude variables affecting cyber violence. In the future, it is necessary to construct a comprehensive research model that considers other variables that may affect cyber violence.

**Ethical Clearance:** Not required

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**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

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